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## Two Wisconsin schools are part of pilot project with Smithsonian

*Oshkosh Area and Verona Area school district teachers to train with Smithsonian researchers and exhibit designers*

MADISON—Two Wisconsin teachers will study at the Smithsonian Institution Nov. 13-17 to gain hands-on experience with the museum's vast resources and share that learning with their students and colleagues.

The teachers—**Frank Devereaux**, a science teacher at Fitchburg's Savanna Oaks Middle School in the Verona Area School District, and **Brenna Garrison-Bruden**, a second- and third-grade teacher at Webster-Stanley Elementary School in the Oshkosh Area School District—will work with Smithsonian designers, writers, and curators to develop projects and lessons related to science and oral history. Wisconsin and Arkansas are the only two states in the pilot project, which is part of the new collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution and the Council of Chief State School Officers aimed at using the museum's researchers and collections to help schools teach 21st century skills. The pilot project will help the Smithsonian develop an educator training model that can be used with more schools next year.

"Both of these teachers already are experienced in having their students learn through projects and problem solving," said State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster. "It is a real honor for Wisconsin to have these two individuals be among the first in this educator training project with the Smithsonian."

Devereaux is committed to project-based learning and to making his students' classroom projects as relevant to situations outside the classroom as possible. Each year, Devereaux challenges his students to solve real problems, for example how to construct a building that will withstand earthquakes. Local architects and structural engineers come to his classroom to demonstrate how science is applied in finding solutions. During his week at the Smithsonian, Devereaux will work with geologists who are studying plate tectonics throughout the world so he can further enrich his students' learning with the latest research in this field.

Garrison-Bruden is a leader in her school, often volunteering for special projects. She expects the same commitment from her students as she involves them in a variety of community service projects to

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enhance their learning. While at the Smithsonian, Garrison-Bruden will learn of new ways to study her own community and to document her findings. Working closely with a folklorist at the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, Garrison-Bruden will practice techniques for collecting oral histories. In meetings with an educator at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum, she'll learn how to help her students research, design, and build their own classroom exhibitions.

"The learning goes both ways," said Stevie Engelke, director of programs for the Smithsonian Center for Education and Museum Studies in Washington, D.C. "Not only do teachers learn from us, we learn from them. This year, for example, I worked with a teacher and her students on podcasting a field trip to the National Museum of Natural History. Imagine being 9 years old and creating a broadcast to share what you learned with hundreds of people."

"The timeliness of this training and International Education Week (Nov. 13-17) reinforce the importance of making learning visible and understandable to a larger community," Burmaster said. "Envisioning and creating museum exhibits requires students to access and analyze information, make choices about what to present, and communicate their findings. These higher-order skills make learning concrete and will help our students connect their education to the real world."

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